



TOWN OF COTTAGE CITY  
TOWN HALL MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2021  
7:00 PM

IN ATTENDANCE

Commissioners: Amarche, Wheatley, Young, Urey, Givens  
Consuella Barbour, Town Manager  
Kevin Best, Town Attorney  
Anthony Ayers, Chief of Police  
Greg Pinkney, Public Works Director  
Mike Lightfield, Town Treasurer

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Wheatley at 7:00pm.

Motion to approve the minutes and financials for March 2021.

Motion by: Amarche; Seconded by: Young

Amarche: Aye, Wheatley: Aye, Young: Aye, Urey: Aye, Givens: Aye

MOTION PASSED.

Public Comments- Wanda Gorham from Delegate Fennel's office spoke about a lot of legislation that passed. She will be sending out a newsletter with all the legislation that has passed. Once we receive this information, we will be able to put it in our newsletter for our community. The Commission asked about getting a mobile vaccine and Ms. Gorham will take that back to Delegate Fennell.

Old business -The Commission discussed the employee handbook. Ms. Barbour incorporated feedback changes from the Commission into the document. FMLA was in the document, and she has left it there. The Town is not required to offer FMLA time. Dual employment and flex time was also some items the Commissioners were looking into. The Commission discussed the pay for employee's service in an acting capacity. They decided to take that section out completely and when a situation arises in the future, they would handle it with more flexibility on a case by case basis. The Commission would like to go over each section that has been changed in the future meetings, making sure each Commissioner is in agreement with the changes. The Commission will discuss more in detail at next month's work session.

Hamlet Park Right of Entry Agreement – Commissioner Wheatley excused herself from the conversation since she is a part of Hamlet Park Board of Directors. This agreement provides signatures for the Board of Directors and the Town to solidify the agreement to provide trash pickup and snow removal on Parkwood Court and continues the agreement for another 10 years. There is a section that states Hamlet Park has to carry and maintain for a period of three years adequate general liability and regular liability of at least \$500,000 coverage for common areas. Two board members (Zadia and Yolanda) spoke and stated that this was the first time she had seen the amount for coverage but that they would definitely look into that and that they would like to continue with this agreement. Mr. Best stated that the amount was very low and conservative.

Motion to renew the agreement for snow and trash removal for Hamlet Park.

Motion by: Amarche, Seconded by: Young

Amarche: Aye, Wheatley: Abstained, Young: Aye, Urey: Aye, Givens: Aye

MOTION PASSED.

New Business: Budget Review and Tax Rate was discussed. The Commission has not increased the tax rate recently. The Commission went over suggestions the Town Manager made to cut the budget:

- -Bobcat purchase estimated to be \$25,000 expense
- -Trikke purchase estimated to be \$12,100 expense
- -Community Outreach cut \$3,000
- -Sprinkler System for building estimated to be \$15,000 expense
- -Emergency Relief Fund cut \$5,000 (the other \$5,000 originally budgeted for could be covered by the American Rescue Plan)
- -Accounting Services stay at \$15,000
- -Health Insurance contribution for employees was originally recommended but she is no longer recommending that after getting figures from our health insurance broker.

Commissioner Givens agreed with all of the suggestions except for the Community Outreach. All of the Commissioners agreed with what the Town Manager suggested except for the Community Outreach. The changes to the budget will be made.

Senator Malcom Augustine was present. He named a few things they did during the legislative session:

- Passed Historic Police Reform
- Fixing and working on broken unemployment system
- Passed Historic Funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Commissioner Givens asked why the Governor vetoed the police reform bill. Senator Augustine discussed a few reasons why. One was that law enforcement had some discomfort with the legislation creating a statewide use of force policy. There was another issue on another bill that dealt with disclosure of disciplinary actions, and he said they decided to include unsubstantiated claims. Everyone agreed there needed to be a police reform, but inside each of those pieces of legislation were different issues. The Commissioners thanked the senator for all his hard work.

The Town Manager went over the 2020 annual report. This is a report to give the public a sense of what we have accomplished in the town from the staff standpoint and the commissioners standpoint. Commissioner Young wants to send out a reminder in the newsletter to make sure cottage city and the correct numbers for when residents do their taxes. The Commission will let her know if any changes need to happen before she publishes it.

End Time Harvest Ministries Letter came from Reverend Addison. We have a graduate in the program from Cottage City and she would like the Town to send a letter showing the municipalities support. Reverend Addison asked if anyone would like to come to the virtual

graduation watch party. The Commission decided to give \$2,000 like we normally do and then \$500.00 to the student.

Pepco EV Chargers – The Commission discussed the empty lot on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Pepco thinks it would be a good location to do that, but there would be a lot of work needed to be done. The program is a 5 year program (they are already 2.5 years into the program) and anything that would occur would have to happen in the next 2 years. The deed shows it has to be used for public use.

Public Works Report – The Commission looked over signage for the Commission to look at for the Electric Vehicle Stations we have at our Town Hall. The Commission liked the idea of the sign to state 6:00am-10:00pm on weekdays and 6:00am-8:00pm on weekends. The maintenance agreement with American Landscaping is up for renewal. The Commission wants to make sure there is no roundup type of ingredients in the materials they use. The Commission discussed the grass surrounding the town hall. The Commission would like Mr. Pinkney to look at other companies as well as prices for different services they would like from American Landscaping and bring it to the next work session. American Landscaping gave a quote for \$650.00 for them to inspect all the trees within Cottage City and provide a detailed recommendation for what is needed and cost for work needed. This would not include any residential properties.

Police Department Report – Chief purchased the Silvertrac program for the next few months. This is a program that helps to document problem areas. It has been in use for the whole month of March, they have had over 1,400 check points hit. Residents have seen more of the officers. New officer, Nancy Moreno, completed her 2 week mandatory field training. Officer Perez got injured off the clock. He will be on light duty for the next 4 weeks. All the officers have completed the body worn camera training. Chief Ayers plans for the body worn cameras to go live by May 3, 2021. The Chief stated that he called an emergency meeting with all the staff due to the recent police shootings and use of force. He discussed their policy on use of force as well as apprehension and arrest procedures. A Police Retention policy is something Chief Ayers is working on and would like to start discussing with the Commission since nationwide, agencies are fighting over officers. Chief Ayers is giving out food approximately three days a week. He also brought a proposal to the Commission to purchase a mini pallet jack, to replace the one that was donated and has now broke. This would help him be able to move current pallets he has right now at the Town Hall.

Ward 1 Report – Commissioner Young thanked the Chief for doing so much good for the residents and the children in our town. She has talked to people interested in the new art center plans. Some commissioners will be meeting with the parks and planning staff, which will be an organizational meeting. There will be future meetings that the public will be notified once plans are starting.

Ward 2 Report – Commissioner Amarche stated that the bridges on Bladensburg Road by Dueling Creek are now both closed on both sides of the road. Pedestrians trying to cross there have to walk into the road. Mr. Pinkney spoke to the county and the county has been slow working on our side due to them noticing that Colmar Manor's side has an erosion problem. They are trying to come up with a way that the bridge will be ADA compliant before they do

any work. No work is taking place yet, but the barricades have been put up. The Commission stated they think this should be a priority safety issue for citizens in the neighborhoods.

Ward 3 Report – No Report

Ward 4 Report – No Report

At-Large Report – No Report

Commissioner Young asked about the Flexible Work options. Ms. Barbour explained that this is a benefit that the Town could offer and would be more formalized in the Employee Handbook. It would be brought to the Commission at the next work session.

Public Comments – Resident David Proctor: EV Charges and Pepco Idea, with public charging you want to look for locations where there is concentration of where people are not going to be able to have a charger when considering putting a charger somewhere. Tree survey - he notices a lot of kudzu around the parks and it seems to get worse every year. He supports the MOU for Hamlet Park.

Commissioner Wheatley called for a motion to go into a closed session to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction meeting.

Motion by: Young; Seconded by: Urey

Amarche: Aye, Wheatley: Aye, Young: Aye, Urey: Aye, Givens: Aye

MOTION PASSED

Meeting went into closed session at 10:22pm.

The Commission came out of closed session. The Commission discussed the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction meeting. All five Commissioners, Town Manager, and Attorney Best were present at the town hall meeting. Commissioner Givens had to leave prior to the meeting going into open session.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:30pm.

Motion made by: Young, Seconded by: Amarche

Amarche: Aye, Wheatley: Aye, Young: Aye, Urey: Aye, Givens: Absent

MOTION PASSED